2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

If a mother could not feed her child well, they used to supplement the mother's milk by broth from meat. Occasionally some woman could be found who would help out.[1] Coming Daylight, for instance, used to allow a son of her mother's brother to nurse, as his own mother was very thin and her milk was insufficient. Another time she nursed the infant son of her cousin whose wife, after he had deserted her, brought their baby to her husband and refused to take it back. Again, Mae's mother nursed several children not her own. When she was an old woman she would complain because she was not invited by these persons. She would fuss along these lines: "They never even invited me once. If it hadn't been for me, they would have starved when they were infants." 853

Early Disciplines

The child was usually not weaned until it was two years old or more. Sometimes a child would be allowed to nurse until six or so, provided his mother did not become pregnant again. There was a boy who had started to school at six, and who would still run up to his mother to nurse when he had the opportunity. Many children would even run in from playing to get at the mother's breast. "It didn't seem to hurt them any!" 862

Definite effort was made to wean the child when the mother became pregnant. "If a woman didn't realize she was in this condition and allowed the child her breast, the child would have a bad stomach and diarrhea." One way of weaning the child was to put nicotine from a pipe on the nipples. The sight of this so frightened the child that he would not try to nurse. If it was dark and he didn't see it and happened to taste it, he would raise an awful cry, but he would be cured. Pepper was also used in the same way. They would give the child as a "pacifier" a piece of meat, pounded soft, sweetened and tied in a soft white rag. The child would suck on this until he fell asleep.

It was when the new baby was born that they would have the most trouble with the child who had just been weaned. Many children were jealous of a new arrival. Coming Daylight said that they had to watch carefully lest an attempt be made to harm the 593

[1] Cf. Kroeber, 1908, p. 181.

3: Cooper E-5 (1938-1940) 1957
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

755
757 sional individuals; supernatural remedies used only by professional medicine men or women with power.

Natural Remedies

751 Both preventive and curative measures of the natural or ra-
515 tional order were numerous.

The most common preventive measure was the daily early morning plunge in the stream or roll in the snow by men, a practice carried out for hardening the body as well as for cleaning
[731] it. In small epidemics scattering and isolation were regularly resorted to in order to check the spread of the disease. The use of skunk fluid as a curative was more a Cree than a Gros Ventre procedure, but there was a Gros Ventre belief that skunk fluid diluted with water and put into the eyes of a person was a preventive and cure of snow-blindness. A mother, on knowing herself
●[862] pregnant again, would cease nursing her infant lest it suffer from "bad stomach and diarrhea." Drinking the blood of a freshly butchered buffalo was looked upon as a preventive of tuberculosis.

757 Curative measures of the rational order were of many kinds. We recorded the following, but our list is far from exhaustive. All of them may best be classified as "domestic remedies," measures of common knowledge, resorted to by everybody who wished to use them, and not considered proprietary right of particular individuals.

757 Many herbal curatives came under this category.[8] The roots of
278 "sweetheart briars," so called because the burrs stuck so tightly, were used for colds, and the deeper the root the stronger was the medicine.[9]

An infusion of peppermint is now used as a beverage by everybody for "fits, spasms and stomach disorders," although the medicinal use of peppermint was formerly the monopoly of Flat Pipe keepers. A very strong drink was made by boiling a certain root and just a little of it drunk as a cure for difficulty in urination.

[8] Cf. list in Kroeber, 1908, pp. 224-27. We made no attempt in the field to
[171] get a full list of such herbal and other curatives.

[9] The Piegan, according to Coming Daylight and Singer, used these as "blood medicine."